

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

TRSE-00 HA-05 MCT-02 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00

INRE-00 COME-00 ACDA-12 /092 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2110

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4715

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MOPS, WA

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN CLASH

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS FROM WINDHOEK, AUGUST 14, THREE SOUTH AFRICAN SOLDIERS AND FIVE SWAPO GUERRILLAS WERE KILLED IN A SKIRMISH NEAR THE ANGOLA BORDER ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 12. GENERAL GELDENHUYS, GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING SWA COMMAND, WAS ALSO QUOTED AS REPORTING THREE MORE BORDER VIOLATIONS FROM ANGOLA INTO OVAMBO ON SUNDAY NIGHT. ALSO, YESTERDAY, AUGUST 13, A SECURITY FORCE PATROL WAS REPORTEDLY FIRED UPON FROM THE ANGOLAN SIDE OF THE BORDER.

2. MEANWHILE, SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA HAVE REPORTED SWAPO'S
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PUBLIC REJECTION OF ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL STEYN'S AUGUST 12 CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE AS "ARROGANT AND PRESUMPTUOUS." SWAPO SPOKESMAN, PETER KATJAVIVI, IS QUOTED AS SAYING "IF AND WHEN THE WAR IS TO END, THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A CLEARED MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN BOTH PARTIES, THE SOUTH AFRICAN OCCUPATION REGIME AND SWAPO FREEDOM FIGHTERS, WORKED OUT UNDER UN AUSPICES."

3. COMMENT: THE INCIDENT ON AUGUST 12 IS THE FIRST REPORTED CLASH IN WHICH SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN KILLED SINCE SWAPO RESUMED ITS GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN THE TERRITORY ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO. THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY LEADERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO INTENSIFY THEIR PRESSURE FOR DIRECT ACTION AGAINST THE ALLEGED SWAPO BUILD-UP ACROSS THE BORDER. SOME SAG LEADERS MAY ALSO FEEL THAT THE STEP-UP IN SWAPO ACTIVITY HAS REACHED THE POINT WHERE FOR POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS IT IS IMPORTANT TO HIT BACK AT THE SWAPO BASES. FAILURE TO ACT, THEY LIKELY FEAR, WILL BE TAKEN BY TRIBAL PEOPLE AS SIGN OF SAG WEAKNESS IN FACE OF SWAPO STRENGTH, THUS GIVING SWAPO SOME BANDWAGON APPEAL WHEN PEOPLE ARE ASKED TO DECIDE AND VOTE WHICH CAUSE THEY SUPPORT.

4. THE SOUTH AFRICANS MAY ALSO CALCULATE THAT JUDGE STEYN'S PLEA FOR A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND THE CATEGORIC REJECTION OF ANY SUCH AGREEMENT BY SWAPO HAS PROVIDED SOUTH AFRICA A POLITICAL AND MORAL FRAMEWORK WHICH WOULD MITIGATE INTERNATIONAL AND PARTICULARLY WESTERN REACTION TO ANY RETALIATORY STRIKES.
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